

Draft Minutes
Montana Transportation Partnership
March 8, 2006 Meeting
Capital Building – Room 172
Helena, MT

Attendees: Marlene Disburg, Nicki Fee, June Hermanson, Phil Hohenlohe, Denise King, Tom Osborn - Chair, Tom Steyeart (for Dick Turner), Arlene Templer, Ken Willett, Randy Velin,

Guest: Anna Whiting-Sorrell, Governor's Office, Patricia Saindon and Director Jim Lynch, Montana Department of Transportation

On the phone: Mary Millin - Vice Chair

Partnership Orientation - History:

Tom Osborn and Marlene Disburg provided a brief history of Partnership, its origin and accomplishments. See FACT Sheet

Anna Whiting-Sorrell - Governor's Office:

Anna emphasized the Governor's commitment to address independence issues such as transportation for persons with disabilities. She noted that early into the Schweitzer administration people with disabilities spoke very loudly and clearly about the need for state coordination of transportation. Governor Schweitzer responded by authorizing an FTE and funding for a transportation coordinator. The position was hired in October 2005 supporting the Governor's commitment to people with disabilities.

Anna reported the Governor's Office has formed a Civil Rights Commission as part of the State's assurance that persons with disabilities rights are met. Anna provided information on her work in the area of youth transitions. Anna will be looking at concept papers from the Disability Action Alliance of Montana, a coalition of disability advocates, to provide a direct and relevant view on disability issues as the Governor's Office proceeds to support those the Department of Public Health and Human Services serves. Anna emphasized Governor Schweitzer's beliefs in integration not segregation for all regardless of gender, income, religion, race...; and, is practicing this value by making sure people with disabilities are represented on all of the Administration's boards and commissions.

Transportation Reauthorization – Montana Department of Transportation

Director Jim Lynch, MDT and Patricia Saindon, provided an overview of the new federal transportation reauthorization legislation - SAFETEA-LU. SAFETEA-LU was passed in August, 2005. SAFETEA-LU provides considerable increases in transit funding to the state of Montana. The State will receive over a 200%

increase in transit funding for the 5311 – General Public Transit Program. In addition to this increase come new program requirements and conditions that states must comply with to receive appropriation – specifically a statutory requirement for locally developed transportation coordination plans. If a transportation provider wants to receive federal transit program funding to acquire capital or receive operating assistance, the provider must be involved in a locally developed coordination plan. Montana has nine non-urbanized general public transit providers; the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) focus is to reach out to those general public transit providers and look at other ways to provide greater access to rides and involve those needing rides in the process of coordination. MDT is encouraging the development of consolidated community transit programs. A map showing existing, potential, and urbanized general transit systems – demonstrating MDT future plans was distributed.

FTA's new Tribal Transportation Program funding will be distributed directly to tribal governments – not through the MDT. It is expected FTA will administer the program as a grant program. There will not be a proportionate amount for each state.

Intercity transportation may see routes previously lost reinitiated as a result of increased intercity program funding. MDT will solicit potential intercity providers for proposals to provide service on several different corridors around the state; and also encouraging local providers to work regionally to move people across county lines. Coordination between counties is progressing. MDT financially supports all intercity transportation services such as Rimrock Stages. At this time Greyhound Services does not provide service in Montana; however they are eligible and can apply for 5311(f) intercity funds if they wish to.

United We Ride Proposal – MDT and DPHHS

A brief history of the United We Ride Initiative was provided. Montana received a grant for \$25,450 in 2004, although needed to submit a formal application prior to draw down of federal dollars. The original UWR intent was to develop community transportation coordination through discussion of a broad and inclusive process. As a result of SAFETEA-LU and corresponding MDT coordination initiatives the original UWR proposal to develop a statewide coordination plan needed to be reviewed and changed. MDT and DPHHS submitted a proposal to MTP and FTA for development of a community coordination Toolkit – building on the current Montana Developmental Disabilities Council Transportation Handbook. MTP was given a deadline of April 1, 2006 to submit a formal proposal to FTA. The UWR grant dollars would have to be expended within a one-year period.

Discussion and comments/concerns on the concept paper included:

Comparisons of the old and the new UWR proposals.

What and how will the Toolkit support providers and get more rides?
Is the intent of original UWR grant being satisfied?
Ensure that the Toolkit supports SAFETEA-LU and MDT coordination plans – ultimately helping TAC members in the process to develop community coordination plans.
The Partnership will have oversight and approval of Toolkit outcome.
MDT will initiate contract to perform work.
Concerns on getting the Toolkit to those who may use it.
Relationship between MCDD Handbook and Toolkit – MCDD distributed the Handbook to all county commissioners, Montana Association of Independent Disability Service Providers (MAIDS), MTP members, and for in-state and out-of-state conferences.
Coordination models that show contracting and agreement process between human service and transit providers.
Address human service issues in Toolkit.

It was noted by MDT that the Partnership could come up with other ideas although had limited time and would need to go through approval by DPHHS and MDT, as directed by FTA, prior to submitting another proposal.

A small group, including, Marlene Disburg, Mary Millin, Tom Osborn, Randy Velin, and Ken Willet, volunteered to review and discuss the proposal, make edit recommendations and submit to full Partnership for approval or rejection.

Emergency and Disaster Services Panel Discussion:

Dan McGowan – State Administrator, Disaster & Emergency Services Division - Military Affairs:

State Disaster and Emergency Services (DES) is the conduit for providing state and federal assistance to cities/counties and tribes during emergencies and disaster. Counties and tribes (where they have a tribal representative) each have what they call an emergency planning committee and they are responsible for everything that happens in that jurisdiction as far as evacuation, sheltering, and dealing with whatever emergency comes their way.

MT DES has two venues. The first is that they have access through the Governor's Office to all of the state agencies and those resources plus a lot of other outside resources. If that particular incident or the request or the capability exceeds the state resources and the states capability then the DES is the conduit to access the federal level resources.

MT DES receives initiatives and direction from the national level. DES is responsible for implementing the federal initiatives right within the state government. The DES is the state administrative agency for Homeland Security Grants through the Department of Homeland Security. The partnership with

federal, state, local, and tribal entities to ensure all operational components are working together for an emergency is very important for the time “when the bell rings” and the tiered system of response is ready to go. MT DES has well over one hundred different entities to coordinate and resolve problems. The DES has and is on 24-hour alert and capability.

Paul Spengler – Lewis & Clark County Disaster & Emergency Services:

A county coordinator’s job is to build relationships between all the different agencies and departments, private and public sector agencies and departments, businesses that would all come together in a disaster or emergency. County coordinators are responsible to ensure that there is an update emergency operations plan for the city and the county.

The Coordinator provides for emergency exercises and training; supported by-monthly meetings to build and maintain relationships before they have a disaster or an emergency.

Lewis and Clark County Emergency and Disaster Services have attempted to ‘put their arms around’ special needs populations and see where they are and how many there are. Statistically, the Federal Government says you can count on 20% of the population will have special needs of various kinds. DES informs all populations, including special needs, that during a major disaster emergency first responders will not be able to pick people up or evacuate in any global manner. The resources are not there to do so. The reality is that all people need to make their own personal preparedness plan. It is important to identify people that are close to you to come and check on you after the emergency and assist for evacuation if necessary.

Red Cross is the ‘go to agency’ for sheltering and feeding people in the event of an evacuation. Lewis and Clark County is working to build a relationship with the Hunger and Homeless Coalition, United Way, and other agencies for assistance in supporting special needs individuals during a disaster or emergency situation.

Karen Semple - Lewis & Clark County Disaster & Emergency Services – Citizens Corps:

Citizen corps works to bring volunteer agencies and any citizen together to discuss the preparedness needs for the community. The focus is to get the public to embrace personal responsibility to be prepared for emergency situations. Lewis and Clark Citizens’ Corp has an annual preparedness fair where responders from every a wide range of agencies are available to interact with the public to educate on what is expected of them in an emergency and what the agency’s responsibilities are. When the council first began the initial need was special needs community and how they would provide information for

the responders when they arrive on scene. A magnet project was initiated to provide emergency reminders such as which items to take when you leave home, i.e., prescription medications, personal hygiene needs, eye glasses, medical id information; and, items that are helpful to have on hand for a period of three days during an emergency. Around 1500 magnets have been distributed in the tri-county area.

www.ready.gov is a good website to get more information on what to do during an emergency.

Joan Bowsher – Lewis & Clark County Public Health – Environmental:

The Health Department's main responsibilities during an emergency is very similar to their everyday responsibilities. The responsibilities are going to be enhanced, blown up and focused a little bit differently. Communicable disease prevention, follow-up, and control are the Health Department's responsibility as would also be during an emergency. Environmental issues would also be followed up on by Health Department staff. During a natural disaster the environmental issues become much more of a focus but with the core focus of preventing the contraction and spread of communicable disease.

One of the issues worked on through a planning process is surge capacity. Planning on where more help can be requested: the who, what, where, when, and how. "Special Needs" populations are always an issue. Contact has been made with Golden Triangle; they have agreed to coordinate the special needs issues of the mental health community. Another issue is the need for special medications and medical supplies. The strategic national stock pile is available to us if the state has declared a state of emergency.

Sandy Sands – Department of Public Health & Human Services – Public Health & Safety Division – Public Health Emergency Preparedness:

Public Health Emergency Preparedness Section is relatively new to the state. They have had funding for five years but the amount of funding increased after 911. The funding that has come into Montana for Public Health Preparedness is another way to prepare for disaster response and recovery. Public Health realized that there was more that needed to be done to keep public health issues at the fore front of disaster management issues as well. DPHHS is a pass through agency for funding and have responsibility for oversight of preparedness planning for the state. Much of the funding they receive goes directly out to the counties and the tribes in Montana. Special needs populations have become one of the hot button topics over the years and the different disasters around the country have highlighted some of those deficits that have existed. Public Health has recently realized that all natural disasters could impact Montana regardless of whether the disaster occurs in Montana or elsewhere. Montana is a leader in many areas in the ways that they are planning and preparing.

Questions and Comments:

How does transportation fit into the plans?

It depends upon resources. There are all sorts of variables in disaster response - it depends upon what the disaster is. The hazards that we are faced with are wildfire, flood, hazardous material release, and seismic activity. You never know exactly where they are going to occur. What needs to be done is to find out what happened and then begin planning. We do have a transportation coordinator and this person is in charge of providing the transportation and then of course it is a matter of contacting the companies. With special needs populations some buses have lifts and could fill a very large bus up with just a few wheel chairs? We have to think about private personal transportation.

University rep: K-12 can lock down but on campus we can not. We are trying to find some type of communication of some kind to account for people. - We educate people in disaster psychology. The biggest thing that we learn from that is first of all your response to the emergency, how are you going to deal with it in your mind and the stress that you are going to deal with, the people around you and then we go through the different age groups. The big thing is to have a plan in place for putting them to work. Find specific ways to get them involved in the response which can be done through training.

Another problem is our communications, our phone systems. System being tied up by parents calling. – If kids are invested in the plan that you have and then get the parents invested then they can understand why they shouldn't call and that as soon as their child can call they will do so. Educate and train them on the plan.

Has the vital terrorism emergency preparedness and risk communication board passed the inspection that the governor has on all the different boards? – We have shifted a little bit on how we have tackled some of the different issues. When the preparedness funding came out it was segmented into seven focus areas. One of the things that were found nation wide was there was someone responsible for each focus area. We had advisory committees that meet on each one of those. One of the things that was found nation wide was that a lot of the teams were not working together or integrating very well. They are now focusing on some primary goals by CDC, our source of funds.

If there are only eleven disaster and emergency coordinators in Montana how do we make sure that the rest of the state is ok? – The whole issue boils down to funding. We are faced with Montana in the last few years have received a whole influx of homeland security moneys and those are starting to diminish because they are shifting the focus to risk and threat base. They are shifting to larger cities the urban area security initiatives. The program that is establish in any given county or state is only as good as the level of commitment that the people

that have the decision making factor about how much they put into a given program is going to be available. Personal preparedness is also important.

Whether or not it would be possible for the panel to come back and make a plan for all of us? – Exactly what do you have in mind? We provide the guidance but the actual plan needs to be written by the people that are going to actually be using it. The plan is your responsibility. We will provide you with the guidance and the help to prepare the plan. The bottom line is self preparedness. We would be willing to come back and meet with you.

Is Paul's position currently funded through homeland security or is it funded through county and state and city? – Half from county and half from FEMA under the emergency management performance grant that we received through Dan's office.

At the local level in reference to the technical assistance that has been developed and then provided can an individual person and/or if an individual had taken their responsibility for evacuation who do they call if they want technical assistance in developing their own individual plan? – Paul is available as well as Karen. The purpose of the citizen corps council is to promote personal preparedness. The reason we were formed was after 9-11. Most people were frustrated and angry and wanted to help but didn't know how so this came from the president's office on down.

Just in follow up to that these citizen corps councils in reference to our state how does that fall down per county? – We have 15 councils so it is spotty. Low population counties are not as prepared unless they can hook up with another county. The information is out there on the web, phone, or mailings.

www.montanahelp.org

How do I find the people that are in these emergency and disaster services? – You go to the disaster and emergency coordinator or emergency manager in the phone book under the county.

Have the volunteer fire departments been participating? – They are. We have 15 VFD and I meet with them on a regular basis. They are trained in basic first aid.

What efforts are taken to ensure institutionalized individuals have decent plans in place and that they continue to be on top of that? – They have plans in place and have practiced those. They work out any issues with those plans. We do not have any oversight for them.

Is there any way of getting a national public announcement out to tell people about the importance of personal preparedness and these websites that they can get this information off? – We do an awful lot of promotion on the media in this

particular county. We encourage people to use the web resources. Using search engines they only need to search for it if they are interested.

Is it possible for us to know where the evacuation centers are? – We don't know because it depends upon the disaster itself. The Red Cross maintains a shelter list but we cannot tell people which would be used because it depends upon the disaster.

Meeting adjourned.

Handouts/Reference Materials: